WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An automotive instrument comprising:

a dial plate;

a light-controllable member arranged in front of the dial plate;

a light transmission control means for controlling light transmission of the light-controllable member; and

a mode selecting switch for selecting a mode of light transmission control performed by the light transmission control means, wherein,

the mode selecting switch includes a manual mode position and an automatic mode position,

the light transmission control means adjusts the light transmission of the light-controllable member to a fixed level when the mode selecting switch is turned to the manual mode position, and controls the light transmission so that the dial plate maintains a predetermined level of visibility when the mode selecting switch is turned to the automatic mode position.

2. The automotive instrument according to claim 1, wherein the mode selecting switch further comprises at least one more manual mode position.

3. The automotive instrument according to claim 1, wherein the mode selecting switch further comprises at least one more automatic mode position.

4. The automotive instrument according to claim 1, wherein the dial plate has a lustrous surface.

5. The automotive instrument according to claim 1, wherein the light-controllable member is an electrochromic display.

6. The automotive instrument according to claim 1, wherein the light-controllable member is a solid-state thin-film electrochromic display.

7. The automotive instrument according to claim 1, further comprising an illuminance sensing means for sensing an illuminance level on a dial plate surface, wherein the light transmission control means controls the light transmission of the light-controllable member based on the illuminance level when the mode selecting switch is turned to the automatic mode position.

8. The automotive instrument according to claim 7, further comprising an illuminance sensing means for sensing an illuminance level in an interior of a vehicle, wherein:

the light transmission control means determines a target illuminance level on the dial plate surface based on the illuminance level in the interior of the vehicle when the mode selecting switch is turned to the automatic mode position; and

the light transmission control means controls the light transmission of the light-controllable member based on the target illuminance level and the illuminance level on the dial plate surface.